



South Eastern Health
and Social Care Trust

Department of Radiology

CT Guided Lung Biopsy

Patient Information

What is a lung biopsy?

A lung biopsy is a way of taking a small sample of lung tissue to be examined under a microscope. Both your consultant and the Radiologist have discussed your case and feel that you would benefit from a lung biopsy.

Benefits

Without a biopsy there may not be enough information to make a diagnosis and your treatment may be affected.

Risks

The CT team will make your procedure as safe as possible. However, as with all medical procedures, there are certain risks some of which can be serious and can even cause death. The risk is 1 in 1,000.

The possible complications of a lung biopsy are outlined below.

Pain

A local anaesthetic should help to keep you comfortable. If you have any pain during the procedure, please tell the Radiologist. Sedation is not given during a lung biopsy.

Pneumothorax

Happens when air escapes into the space around the lung, risk: 1 in 5. Usually a pneumothorax is small and does not cause problems. If a lot of air escapes, this can cause a large pneumothorax, risk: less than 3 in 100. If this happens, the air will need to be removed using a needle (aspiration) or by placing a tube in your chest (chest drain).

You will need to stay in hospital until this resolves.

Allergic reactions

Tell your consultant if you have any allergies or if you have had a reaction to any drugs or procedures in the past.

Bleeding from a biopsy site

Usually any bleeding is minor and stops on its own. If you lose a lot of blood, you may require a blood transfusion and an overnight stay in hospital.

Females 11-55 years

Imaging under CT control must be undertaken within the first 10 days from the beginning of your period. If this appointment does not fall within the first 10 days,

please rebook your appointment by telephoning:

Ulster appointments (028) 9055 0476

Lagan Valley appointments (028) 9250 1262

Preparation

If you take medication to thin the blood, please contact your Consultant as this medication must be stopped for a specific length of time before the procedure.

It is advisable to bring all your medications with you.

Please arrange for a friend or relative to collect you following the procedure. It is essential that a responsible adult remains with you for the next 24 hours. If this cannot be arranged please inform your referring Consultant's secretary who will organise an overnight bed for you.

The Procedure

Fasting

You must not eat for six hours before the procedure, however you may drink clear fluids such as water until two hours before.

Within 2 hours of the procedure prescribed medications, especially pre-medication can be taken with a small drink of water (30ml).

If you are an insulin dependent diabetic, please contact the hospital's Diabetic Advice team prior to admission on (028) 9056 1426.

Admission

A biopsy is usually carried out as a day procedure. During admission you will be asked about your medical history. A small plastic port known as a cannula will be placed in a vein; and blood samples will be taken. You will be asked to change into a gown before transfer to the CT Team.

CT Team

A lung biopsy usually takes less than three-quarters of an hour. It involves placing a needle through the chest wall and into the lung.

You will meet a number of staff who will look after you during the procedure. You must have a clear understanding of what the procedure involves including the risks and benefits. If you have not already done so, you will be asked to sign a consent form and the Radiologist will answer any questions you may have.

Following transfer to the CT table you will most likely be required to lie face down. The skin will be cleaned with an antiseptic solution and then numbed with an injection of local anaesthetic.

You must lie very still throughout the procedure and you may be asked to hold your breath. Expect the table to move in and out of the CT system during scanning time.

Recovery

After the procedure you will be transferred back into bed and you must lie flat on your back for at least 3 hours. You will be closely monitored by the nursing and medical staff on the ward. Before discharge a chest X-ray will be undertaken.

You should be able to return to work the day following the procedure unless you are told otherwise. You can resume normal activities but should avoid lifting and strenuous exercise for 48 hours.

It is normal to cough up some streaks of blood for several days following the procedure. If you cough up more than a teaspoon of blood go immediately to the Emergency Department. If you become short of breath or have severe chest pain, call an ambulance.

Results

The results of your lung biopsy will take approximately one week and will be forwarded to your consultant who will contact you directly.

It is possible that the results may not provide enough information to make a diagnosis. In this instance, a repeat lung biopsy or a bronchoscopy may be required.

Normally you should not fly for one month following a lung biopsy. If you have a small pneumothorax, it may get bigger during the flight, making it difficult for you to breathe. If you want to fly in less than one month, you should discuss this with your consultant.

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